



San Diego City Attorney CASEY GWINN

NEWS RELEASE

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**CITY ATTORNEY AWARDS
“ATTORNEY OF THE YEAR” HONOR
TO 18-YEAR VETERAN OF THE OFFICE
*Jim Chapin Handles High Profile Cases; Honored at City Council***

San Diego, CA: He made a media giant take down its alcohol billboard signs which violated school zones; he forced a business owner to honor his agreement to shut-down adult bookstores located near residential neighborhoods; and he defended the City’s Juvenile Curfew Ordinance which gave law enforcement tool to get juvenile troublemakers off the streets. These legal successes in the courtroom are among the reasons why City Attorney Casey Gwinn named Senior Deputy City Attorney Jim Chapin the “2003 Attorney of the Year” in the Civil Division of the City Attorney’s Office. “Jim has consistently provided outstanding legal service to the City of San Diego,” said Gwinn. “He tackles the most complex and varied problems with enthusiasm and produces great results. Jim is a shining example of excellence.”

The news media is also familiar with Senior Deputy City Attorney Chapin. They have followed him into the courtroom, reporting on a variety of high profile cases Chapin has handled with professionalism and poise.

- *City of San Diego v. “F” Street Corporation*, Superior Court: injunction closing adult bookstores;
- *Clear Channel, Inc and Viacom, Inc v. City of San Diego*, Federal District Court: challenge to Billboard Ordinance restricting alcohol advertising—favorable settlement.

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- *Gabriel Nunez, et al. v. City of San Diego*, 9th Circuit Court of Appeal: juvenile curfew authorized with minor amendments;
- *Citizens for Safe Drinking Water v. Council for the City of San Diego*, Superior Court: challenge to state- mandated fluoridation program; and
- *Harvey Furgatch v. San Diego Unified Port District, et al.*, Superior Court: challenge to Port contribution to Ballpark Redevelopment—verdict for City and Port at Trial Court, appeal pending;

Most recently, Senior Deputy City Attorney Chapin settled a civil lawsuit against a global commercial real estate company that rents to the City of San Diego. On January 9, a San Diego Superior Court jury found the real estate company liable for overbilling the City of San Diego, over a ten-year period, on downtown city-leased office space at 1200 Third Avenue. Chapin presented the City Attorney with a \$3-million cash settlement from CB Richard Ellis.

Jim Chapin began his legal career in the City Attorney’s Office in 1985—he started in the Criminal Division in the same class with City Attorney Gwinn. Chapin quickly distinguished himself in the Criminal Division where he was appointed the Presiding Deputy responsible for assigning and supervising all criminal trials. In 1988, Chapin transferred to the Civil Division. His experience includes: special projects litigation (Ballpark, First Amendment, the Brown Act, the CA Public Records Act Requests, taxation, contracts, utilities, and elections); trials, writs, and appeals in state and federal courts; and, training on civil practice before trial, civil motions, governmental claims, civil trials, writs and appeals. Prior to joining the City Attorney’s Office, Chapin was a research attorney in the San Diego District Attorney’s Office and was an attorney in private practice in Gainesville, Florida.

But Chapin’s tenacity in the courtroom is not the only reason he gets high marks from the legal community, colleagues and support staff. Chapin is also a mentor in the office. “Deputies across the division

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seek Jim's advice and his knowledge on a broad range of topics," said Chapin's investigator of sixteen years, Robert Abel. "His friendly style makes him approachable and his door is always open to his colleagues."

The goals of the Civil Division are to protect the quality of life and the public funds of the citizens of San Diego by defending and prosecuting civil lawsuits, and to advise City Officials. The award acknowledges and rewards the Civil Division Deputy City Attorney whose professional accomplishments and abilities, and contributions to the community, best demonstrate and fulfill the goals of the San Diego City Attorney's Office. "The Office is very fortunate to have Jim on its staff. His expertise, professionalism, and work ethic are exemplary," said Assistant City Attorney Anita Noone.

The announcement was made at this afternoon's City Council meeting. The Mayor and the San Diego City Council also commended Jim Chapin. The City Attorney presented Chapin with a proclamation, declaring the day in his honor. Family and colleagues of Chapin packed the council chambers and gave him a standing ovation.

Chapin received his J.D. degree from the University of Florida Law School in 1977. He is married and has two teenage children. In his spare time he coaches AIA Youth Basketball, Pop Warner football and freshman baseball. He also serves on the board of the Clairemont Pony Baseball League and is active in the PTA. Jim Chapin also loves to play the piano and guitar; often playing at fundraisers and family and office events.

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